612 601 Although the Saru Ainu did not have a single word to designate this group of matrilineally related men and women, there were terms which, taken together, referred to such a group. In the Saru River valley the term *ir-matainu* designated those who composed the matrilineal descent group (*kuchi ikir*). Sons and brothers of *ir-matainu* were called *ir-matainu esap utar*, meaning "those who have descended from matrilineally related women"; interpreted literally, this would designate matrilineally related men and women, that is, all members of a matrilineage in the ordinary sense of the term. But since *ir-matainu* already designated matrilineally related women, the term *ir-matainu esap utar* was reserved for matrilineally related men. If these two terms were combined, we would have a matrilineage composed of both sexes. The marriage regulations discussed above, then, [582] would express a rule of lineage exogamy prohibiting marriage between *ir-matainu* and *ir-matainu esap utar*.

614 184 601 In the neighboring Shibechari River valley there was a single expression denoting the matrilineage. Here a matrilineal group (i.e., the *kuchi ikir* of the Saru River valley) was called *mat ikir* ("female line"), and matrilineally related men and women, taken together, were called *shine mat ikir esap utar*, meaning "those who have descended from the same female line," i.e., a matrilineage.

These marriage rules and linguistic expressions would seem to indicate that the Ainu possessed matrilineages. We are not certain what functions, in addition to the regulation of marriage, the matrilineage might have had. The authority relationship between mother's brother and sister's son, which normally plays a crucial role in a matrilineal system, appears to have been absent among the Ainu. Instead, father-son and father's brother-brother's son relationships seem to have been critical. It appears as though the relatively strong solidarity of the patrilineal group overshadowed the significance of the matrilineage. With this meager evidence, however, we cannot insist too strongly on the existence of the matrilineage, but we should consider it in some measure as hypothetical until further evidence is adduced.

Conclusion

611 614 602 The most significant feature of Ainu social organization was undoubtedly the unique manner of tracing descent. Men, tracing their descent patrilineally, and women, doing so matrilineally, were organized into separate unisexual groups. What could this type of descent system be called in contradistinction to typical unilineal and double unilineal descent? We propose adoption of the term "parallel descent," advanced by Davenport (1959: 570), since his discussion suggests a close resemblance to the Ainu rule of descent.

614 602 The Ainu descent group, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, was not "corporate" in the sense of the common possession of property upon which the subsistence of the group's members depended (Befu